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SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

[13 October 1993]

I. LAND AND PEOPLE

1. The main ethnic groups are as follows: Africans (82,075), mixed (17,501), Amerindians (3,347) and East Indians (1,477).

2. The economic indicators are:

Per capita income: EC$ 4,468

Rate of inflation:	1990	1991	1992
	9.2%	2.3%	3.1%

External debt (millions EC$):

Disbursed outstanding debt -	1990	1991	1992
	149.2	171.3	182.4

Gross National Product: 1990
494.5 (million EC$)

(It should be noted that GNP for 1991 and 1992 are not computed as yet.)

Rate of employment - 20%

Literacy rate - Not available.

Religion - See table attached.

Life expectancy: Male - 68 years
Female - 73 years

Infant mortality rate - 19.3 per thousand (1991)

Maternal mortality - Not available

Fertility rate - 3.1

Population: Male - 53,165
Female - 53,334
Total - 106,499

Under 15: Male - 20,061
Female - 19,565
Total - 39,626

Over 65 years:

Male - 2,887
Female - 4,029
Total - 6,916

Urban - Rural not defined in census

Percentage of households headed by women - 39%.

POPULATION BY RELIGION AND SEX

1980 AND 1991

Religion	1980			1991			% Change		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Anglican	20 065	20 617	40 682	15 329	14 196	29 525	-23.6	-31.1	-27.4
Baptist (Spiritual)	2 361	3 453	5 814	4 339	5 925	10 264	83.8	71.6	76.5
Brethren	509	644	1 153	680	792	1 472	33.6	23.0	27.7
Church of God	957	1 192	2 149	1 071	1 363	2 434	11.9	14.3	13.3
Jehovah's Witness	176	210	386	261	335	596	48.3	59.5	54.4
Methodist	10 034	10 370	20 454	8 339	7 866	16 205	-17.3	-24.1	-20.8
Pentecostal	1 767	2 179	3 946	4 975	6 126	11 101	181.6	181.1	181.3
Presbyterian/Congregational	66	41	107	68	52	120	3.0	26.8	12.1
Roman Catholic	5 606	5 723	11 329	5 195	4 878	10 073	-7.3	-14.8	-11.1
Salvation Army	86	87	173	112	129	241	30.2	48.3	39.3
Seventh-Day Adventists	1 934	2 377	4 311	4 063	4 792	8 855	110.1	101.6	105.4
Rastafarian*				746	144	890			
Other	2 197	2 587	4 784	3 808	4 705	8 513	73.3	81.9	77.9
None	1 044	537	1 581	3 335	1 508	4 843	219.4	180.8	206.3
Not stated	557	419	976	844	523	1 367	51.5	24.8	40.1
Total	47 409	50 436	97 845	53 165	53 334	106 499	12.1	5.7	8.8

Note: * Not classified.

Source: 1980 and 1991 Population and Housing Census.

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY RELIGION AND SEX

1980 AND 1991

Religion	1980			1991		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Anglican	42.3	40.9	41.6	28.8	26.6	27.7
Baptist (Spiritual)	5.0	6.8	5.9	8.2	11.1	9.6
Brethren	1.1	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.4
Church of God	2.0	2.4	2.2	2.0	2.6	2.3
Jehovah's Witness	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6
Methodist	21.3	20.6	20.9	15.7	14.7	15.2
Pentecostal	3.7	4.3	4.0	9.4	11.5	10.4
Presbyterian/Congregational	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Roman Catholic	11.8	11.3	11.6	9.8	9.1	9.5
Salvation Army	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Seventh-Day Adventists	4.1	4.7	4.4	7.6	9.0	8.3
Rastafarian*	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.3	0.8
Other	4.6	5.1	4.9	7.2	8.8	8.0
None	2.2	1.1	1.6	6.3	2.8	4.5
Not stated	1.2	0.8	1.0	1.6	1.0	1.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: * Not classified.

Source: 1980 and 1991 Population and Housing Census.

II. GENERAL POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Brief political history

3. The fact that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was a colony of Great Britain for more than 200 years played (and is still playing) a significant role in the development of politics and political structures in the country. From 1763 when the islands were finally ceded to Britain to 1979 when the State became independent the pace of political change was tremendously influenced by the mother country.

4. The Government of Saint Vincent originally consisted of a Governor, Council and Assembly. Some of the members of these administrative organs were appointed officials and the others were elected on a property-based franchise system. In 1856 an executive council was created which dealt with the day-to-day administration of the internal affairs of the colony. A few years before in 1838 the slaves were freed, but they took no part in the political process. The year 1867 saw the abolition of the two houses (the Council and Assembly) and their replacement by one legislative assembly which was comprised of appointed, nominated and elected officials. But again the

electorate consisted of only that part of the society which had property and the landless (the vast majority of the population of the colony) had no franchise.

5. In 1877, the local legislature decided that "Crown Colony Government" should be introduced and consequently the legislative council consisted of official and unofficial members nominated and/or appointed by the mother country, but no elected representative. Not until 1925 was there a return to the principle of elected representatives, but then again only the landowning class had the right to vote and the populace remained outside the political process.

6. These different forms of government which existed before the inception of universal adult suffrage in 1951 did not allow for the formation of political parties, but from the beginning of the present century efforts had begun to set up different political mechanisms to give the populace a say in government and to reorganize the political structures of the colony. The first such mechanism was the Saint Vincent Representative Government Association which appeared in 1919 and played its part in the liquidation of Crown Colony Government. This was not a political party in the true sense, but it was a new and very important element in the emerging political structure of the country.

7. In 1935, due mainly to the economic hardships faced by the masses, there were disturbances and rioting. This in part led to the formation of the Saint Vincent Working Men's Association (WMA) which had over 4,000 members within a few months. This was the first mass movement with a political agenda in this State seeking to represent the interests of the poor and powerless. The WMA contested the 1937 elections (by which time Saint Vincent and the Grenadines had five electoral districts and consequently five elected members) against a new party, the Planters and Peasants Association. The WMA won those elections and added a new dimension to politics in the country - a movement which had mass support (if not in the expression of electoral franchise, then in moral support) and got its members elected.

8. In 1940 the WMA, which had evolved into a trade union, launched the Labour Party which won the elections of that year. This signalled the role trade unions were to play in the development of politics in this State. From the 1940s trade unions have become a permanent and vital part of the political system.

9. The year 1951 saw the arrival of universal adult suffrage which meant that the majority of the adult population could now actively take part in the political process. This led to the formation of new political parties. This period also saw the creation of a new trade union, the United Workers and Rate Payers Union. This Union, which had tremendous support from the ordinary masses and was led by people from among their ranks, set up its political party, the Eighth Army of Liberation, which won all eight seats in the elections of that year, and consequently provided an assembly where the elected members were a reflection of the wish of the populace. Apart from the political parties independent candidates started participating in the election and as such started playing their role in the politics of the State.

10. From the 1950s onwards the political system of this State comprised (apart from the nominated, appointed and elected members of the House) two or more political parties, unattached political activists (who ran as independent candidates in the elections) and trade unions directly affiliated to political parties.

11. Today, 14 years after independence, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has a political structure in which three political parties play the leading role in the political life of the State, the New Democratic Party, the Saint Vincent Labour Party and the Movement for National Unity. It should be mentioned here that only one of these parties (the New Democratic Party) is in Parliament as it won all 15 seats in the last general elections held in May 1989. Apart from these parties there are more than four trade unions, a National Youth Council, a vibrant women's movement, the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Human Rights Association and a number of other non-governmental organizations which all fit into the political structure of the country and make active contributions to its political life.

Organization of the legislative organ

12. Section 37 of the Saint Vincent Constitution gives Parliament the authority to make laws for the State of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, thus making it the legislative arm of the State. According to section 23 of the Constitution Parliament comprises Her Majesty (represented by the Governor-General) and the House of Assembly.

13. The Constitution stipulates that the House of Assembly consists of elected representatives of the people and senators appointed by the Governor-General. The House of Assembly has 15 elected representatives (1 from each of the country's 15 constituencies) and 6 senators, 4 appointed on the advice of the Prime Minister and 2 appointed on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition.

14. To be elected to the House of Representatives a person must be a Commonwealth citizen 21 years or older, must have resided in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for a period of 12 months immediately prior to the date of his nomination for election or be domiciled and resident in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines at that date, and must be able to speak, and unless incapacitated by blindness or other physical cause, read the English language with a degree of proficiency to be able to participate actively in the proceedings of the House.

15. Sittings of the House are presided over by the Speaker of the House who is elected by the House. In his absence this function is carried out by the Deputy Speaker or a member of the House (who is not a member of the Cabinet or a parliamentary secretary) who is elected by the same for this purpose.

16. If the Speaker of the House is not an elected representative or a senator he becomes a member on his election, but does not have an original or casting vote. A member of the House who is elected Speaker has only a casting vote. If the House is voting on a bill to change the Constitution in any way and the Speaker is an elected representative, he has an original or ordinary vote but no casting vote.

17. All members of the House who do not support the Government are considered opposition numbers. The Leader of the Opposition is appointed by the Governor-General. The person appointed to this post is that representative who commands the support of the majority of representatives who do not support the Government.

18. If the seat of an elected member (a representative) becomes vacant before the end of his term otherwise than by the dissolution of Parliament, there must be a by-election to fill the vacancy within 90 days; should the seat of a senator become vacant under the same circumstances an appointment must be made to fill the vacancy within 90 days unless Parliament is dissolved sooner.

19. Proceedings of the House are summoned by the Clerk of the House and records of the proceedings are kept by him. The office of Clerk of the House is a public office. The House regulates its proceedings and made rules for their conduct subject to the provisions of the Constitution.

Type of government and organization of the Executive

20. From the inception of universal adult suffrage in 1951, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' Executive has comprised members democratically elected by the majority of the people. Today the Government is formed by the political party victorious in general elections which are held every five years. According to section 50.1 of chapter 4 of the Saint Vincent Constitution Order 1979, the executive authority of Saint Vincent may be exercised on behalf of Her Majesty by the Governor-General. Section 19 of this Constitution states that the Governor-General shall be Her Majesty's representative in Saint Vincent. This in fact makes the Governor-General the de jure head of State in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

21. The day-to-day affairs of the State are administered by the Cabinet of Ministers which consists of the Prime Minister and other ministers, and is headed by the former. This Cabinet is collectively responsible to Parliament for the management of the affairs of the State.

22. Ministers are usually elected representatives of the people although two can be appointed from among the senators of the House. The Prime Minister is appointed by the Governor-General. This appointment is made on the basis that the person being appointed commands the support of the majority of the elected representatives. All ministers are appointed by the Governor-General acting on the advice of the Prime Minister. These ministers usually head different ministries (except in the case of junior minister). Up to August of 1993 there were nine different ministries in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

23. The Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Constitution makes provisions for the removal from office of the Prime Minister and other ministers should circumstances determine that they be removed before their term in office expires.

24. The Governor-General can on the advice of the Prime Minister appoint parliamentary secretaries from among the members of Parliament. The task of these secretaries is to assist the ministers in their work.

Organization of the Judiciary: Magistrate's Court

25. The Magistrate's Court is the first rung in the ladder of judicial organs in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The country is divided into three magisterial districts, and therefore has a Magistrate's Court in each district. This court has a single presiding officer, a magistrate who is appointed by the Governor-General acting with the advice of the Judicial and Legal Services Commission.

26. A magistrate of this court has full jurisdiction and power, within and outside his district, to receive and inquire into all charges on indictable offences whether they have been committed within or outside his district. In his district a magistrate has full jurisdiction and power to hear and determine all complaints or information for summary conviction offences and to hear and determine all civil claims and demands not exceeding $6,000 if the defendant resides in the district, when the cause of that case has arisen within the district or when the issue which is the subject-matter of the dispute is in the district. This court has no jurisdiction to try an offence punishable with death which is not punishable with imprisonment.

27. There is a clerk of the court whose functions include the making of copies of the proceedings and the recording of judgements, convictions and orders of the court.

28. The Laws of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines stipulate that parties to a case in the Magistrate's Court have the right to legal representation and the right to appeal.

29. Hearings in the Magistrate's Court are usually held in open courtroom to which the general public has access unless the magistrate sees fit to order otherwise.

Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court

30. The next rung in the ladder of judicial organs in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. As the name suggests, this court has jurisdiction not only in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, but in the other eastern Caribbean States. This court actually comprises two courts: the High Court of Justice and the Court of Appeal.

31. The Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court is headed by the Chief Justice who is appointed by the Heads of Government Conference of the Eastern Caribbean States; he in turn appoints all the other judges of the Supreme Court, i.e. the puisne judges of the High Court and the judges of the Court of Appeal.

High Court

32. The High Court has jurisdiction in all civil and criminal cases which do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Magistrate's Court. Apart from the puisne judge who is the presiding officer of the court, there are a number of other officers of this court, including the registrar, who is appointed by the Governor-General on advice of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission.

33. The functions of the registrar of the High Court include such duties as are necessary for the proper conduct and discharge of the business of the same and to assist the chief registrar of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court in the performance of his/her duties. The bailiff of the High Court, in addition to his duties as bailiff, must also perform if required the duties of crier of the High Court.

34. In civil proceedings it is within the jurisdiction of the judge of the High Court to order trial with or without a jury unless upon the application of any party of the proceeding a trial with jury is ordered. A party may apply for trial with jury in the High Court if the judge is satisfied that there is a charge of libel, slander, malicious prosecution, false imprisonment, seduction or breach of promise of marriage.

35. In criminal proceedings being heard before the High Court a panel of jurors is essential. These jurors are drawn from a jurors list prepared by the magistrate of each district and revised and put into the juror's book by the registrar of the High Court. The jury in a criminal trial other than for a capital offence consists of nine jurors who are selected by ballot. Their decision must be unanimous if reached within two hours of deliberations, but if reached after more than two hours there must be a verdict of seven jurors. The jury in a trial for a capital offence consists of 12 persons.

36. The parties in such proceedings have the right to challenge peremptorily three jurors. Later challenges shall be considered by the court if good reasons can be given.

37. All hearings in the High Court are open to the general public except in cases where the judge in his absolute discretion exercises either on his own motion or on application by any party to the proceedings his authority in deciding whether the public generally or part thereof shall not have access to the courtroom.

Court of Appeal

38. The Court of Appeal comprises four judges one of whom is the chief justice of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, but at hearings of the Court of Appeal only three judges are required to sit. Other officers of the Court of Appeal include the chief registrar who must take all necessary steps for obtaining a hearing of any appeals or applications in the Court of Appeal. There is also a registrar who must perform such duties as are necessary for the due conduct and discharge of the business of the Court of Appeal and who assist the chief registrar in the performance of his/her duties.

39. Subject to conditions stipulated in the laws of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines the Court of Appeal has jurisdiction to hear and determine appeals from the Magistrate's as well as the High Court, whether they may be on matters of a civil or criminal nature.

40. In criminal cases a person convicted on indictment may appeal to the Court of Appeal against his conviction on any ground of appeal which involves a question of law, fact or any other ground which appears to the court

sufficient to justify an appeal. A person may also with the agreement of the Court of Appeal appeal against his sentence once that sentence is not fixed by law.

41. Except in cases where the appeal is on some ground of law alone, the appellant has a right to be present if he so desires; he however could be allowed to attend proceedings dealing with an appeal on question of law alone should the court so decide.

Her Majesty in Council

42. The final rung in this ladder of judicial organs with jurisdiction to determine cases originating in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is Her Majesty in Council or sometimes called the Privy Council. This council, located in England, serves as a final Court of Appeal for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

43. An appeal can be made to this council after the case has been heard and determined by the Court of Appeal. These appeals are allowed only with leave of the Court of Appeal or with leave of the council itself, and concern questions of law only.

III. GENERAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH HUMAN RIGHTS ARE PROTECTED

44. The Judiciary, right up to the Privy Council, is, by section 16 of the Constitution, directly given jurisdiction affecting fundamental rights and freedoms. Administrative and competent authorities are in consequence bound to observe and give full effect to those rights because the conduct of such bodies in relation to those rights is subject to judicial review under section 16.

45. Section 16 gives a person the right to apply to the High Court as a court of first instance to hear and determine any allegation made by him that any of his fundamental rights and freedoms has been, is being or is likely to be contravened. Any person has a right of access to the courts where such a contravention is alleged, even in relation to another person who is detained. In the exercise of the judicial power under section 16 the courts make declarations of violation of rights and award damages in respect thereof. The courts also have express power to make such orders and issue such directions as they consider appropriate for the purpose of enforcing or securing the enforcement of any of the provisions of the fundamental rights sections.

46. All the civil and political rights referred to in the international Covenant are substantially protected by the Saint Vincent Constitution Order 1979. Other protective legislative measures in force are cited in the annex to this report. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has no separate Bill of Rights. Particular reference is made to sections 1-17 (inclusive) of the Constitution, a copy of which is also to be found in the annex*. Except to the extent that any derogation appears in any of the aforesaid sections, the

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* Available for consultation with the Secretariat.

fundamental rights and freedoms referred to are of full force and effect. Section 101 of the Constitution provides that the Constitution is the supreme law of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and if any other law is inconsistent with it the Constitution shall prevail and the other law shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void.

47. The provisions of the Covenant may not be invoked before or directly enforced by the courts, other tribunals or administrative authorities but they can indirectly be enforced by the courts to the extent that they are subsumed in comparable provisions of the Constitution and the ordinary statute law of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

48. The following table indicates the sections of the Constitution or other Statute laws of Saint Vincent which deal with the corresponding articles of the Covenant:

The Covenant	Section of the Constitution and/or other statute law
Article 1	Section 1
Article 2	Sections 1, 13 and 16
Article 3	Section 13 Women in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines hold office as permanent secretaries of ministries and other senior positions in the civil service; they are also at liberty to become practitioners of all professions and trades, which they are increasingly doing.
Article 4	Sections 14, 15 and 16
Article 5	In so far as fundamental human rights are required to be preserved by article 5 of the Covenant, those rights which are enshrined in the Constitution may be altered only by the special procedure provided for so doing by section 38 of the Constitution, which requires that "(a) There has been an interval of not less than 90 days between the introduction of the bill in the House and the beginning of the proceedings in the House on the second reading of the bill; and (b) after it has been passed by the House the bill has been approved on a referendum by not less than 2/3 of all the votes validly cast at the referendum".
Article 6	Sections 2, 65 and 66
Article 7	Section 5
Article 8	Section 8

Article 9	Section 3
Article 10	Sections 33, 34, 38, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 50 and 53 of the Prisons Act, Chapter 281 of the 1990 Revised Edition of the Laws of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Juveniles Act, Chapter 168 of the 1990 Revised Edition of the Laws of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines covers the areas mentioned in Article 10 of the Convention.
Article 11	Section 3 Debtors, Chapter 86 of the 1990 Revised Edition of the Laws of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
Article 12	Section 4 Section 12
Article 13	Undesirable Persons Expulsion, Chapter 77 of the 1990 Revised Edition of the Laws of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Section 2 (1) and (2) and Sections 8-12
Article 14	Section 8
Article 15	Section 8
Article 16	Section 8
Article 17	Sections 6 and 7 Libel and Slander Act Chapter 89 of the 1990 Revised Edition of the Laws of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
Article 18	Section 9
Article 19	Section 10
Article 20	Section 2 (1) (a)
Article 21	Section 11
Article 22	Section 11
Article 23	The rights protected by article 23 of the Covenant are fully recognized in the Marriage Act, Chapter 173 of the 1990 Revised Edition of the Laws of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and its amendments (in particular Act No. 31 of 1984 and 13 of 1987). The Divorce and Matrimonial Proceedings (Declaration of Date) Act, Chapter 18 of the 1990 Revised Edition of the Laws of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines which makes provision for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to exercise the law and practice administered on 1 June 1984 in the

	High Court of Justice in England in Divorce and Matrimonial Proceedings.
	Registration of Births and Deaths Act, Chapter 179 of the 1990 Revised Edition of the Laws of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Section 16
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Citizenship Act No. 12 of 1984, Chapter 80 of the Revised Edition of the Laws of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sections 4, 5 and 8 Sections 90, 91, 92, 93 and 94
Article 25	Section 27 Representation of the People Act, Chapter 6 of the 1990 Revised Edition of the Laws of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
Article 26	Sections 8 and 16
Article 27	Sections 9, 13 and 16

49. The Constitution of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines deals with fundamental rights and freedoms. Every person in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms, for instance, life, liberty, security of the person and the protection of the law; freedom of conscience, of expression and of assembly and association and protection for the privacy of his home and other property and from deprivation of property without compensation. Sections 23 to 36 deal with the composition of Parliament. Sections 65 to 66 refer to the prerogative of mercy and the Advisory Committee on same.

INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY

Language

50. English is the official and national language of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and as such all United Nations documents are always in English. As this is one of the official languages of the Organization, there is no use for translation as English is the only language spoken by Vincentians.

The role of non-governmental organizations

51. There are many non-governmental organizations in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines involved in the promotion of human rights and the improvement of people's knowledge about the contents of the various international instruments designed to protect and upgrade these rights. These include the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Human Rights Association (SVG-HRA), the different trade unions, the Women's Movement, the Committee against Violence and the National Youth Council.

52. The Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Human Rights Asscciation was set up in 1986. This organization is the most comprehensive of all non-governmental organizations in its approach to human rights and to informing the Vincentian public about the nature, contents and importance of the different international instruments which deal with the question of human rights. The activities of this Association vary and seek to involve the public at large. The SVG-HRA has held seminars, workshops and symposia at which the contents and importance of international instruments on human rights have been discussed and to which the public in general was invited. The Association holds discussions on radio and television programmes in which the contents of these documents are explained and expressed in such language that the essence of these documents are clear to the populace. The contents of such documents as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child have all been discussed. The SVG-HRA also visits secondary schools in the State and holds discussion with the students on different questions of human rights so as to enlighten them on these matters.

53. There are several vibrant and active trade unions in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines which represent the interests of a wide cross-section of the workers. These include the National Workers Movement, the Commercial Technical and Allied Workers Union, the Saint Vincent Union of Teachers, the Public Service Union and the National Farmers Unions. These unions hold seminars and other activities where their members and other interested persons are informed of the different international instruments adopted by the ILO for the protection and improvement of workers' rights. The activities of the trade unions in the field of human rights are not as wide-ranging as those of the SVG-HRA as the former are concerned mainly with workers' rights; they therefore pay more attention to those instruments adopted by the ILO.

54. The different women's organizations in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have as their main objective the improvement of the status of women in this State. They have encouraged respect and improvement of women's rights by conducting seminars and hosting various activities. They have through different publications and programmes tried to highlight the rights of women as stipulated in the different international instruments which deal specifically with these rights. These organizations play a vital role in the education of women about their rights.

55. The National Youth Council (N.Y.C.) is an umbrella body to which all the youth organizations in the State are affiliated. It is concerned mainly with the improvement of the youth of the country and consequently tries to improve their knowledge about their rights. The N.Y.C., through its radio programmes, publications, workshops and seminars, has been informing youths and the general public on the contents of such international agreements on human rights as the Convention on the Rights of the Child.